FIRST READER THESIS REVIEW FORM

Name of the Student	Nicole Molinari
Date of Submission	16 June 2023
Title of the Thesis	European Solidarity among the Italian Diaspora
Reviewer Name / Affiliation	Dr Maxine David / Leiden University

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

Is the thesis in your assessment free of plagiarism?

Yes. None detected in reading or in Turnitin report.

KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD
(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review)

The student asks, "How does the European solidarity perception of the Italian diaspora influence their vote in national elections?". The RQ is well contextualised and significance argued for convincingly. The underpinning concepts for the thesis are identified and then explored to good effect in the literature review. That review is very nicely categorised by key debates, the student demonstrates good understanding of them and we always know where they stand in relation to them. The summary and interim conclusions are clearly articulated and in so doing, the student is persuasive in arguing for an original contribution to be made.

ANALYSIS
(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources)

In the discussion of methodological issues, the student sets out good justifications for their approach and anticipates counter-arguments well. Excellent connections to the literature are made and any divergence from that accounted for. As part of the analytical framework, the student analyses electoral manifestos and this provides important context for understanding both the survey questions and, potentially, their responses. The coding here is properly located in both a deductive and inductive approach and the student relates their findings back clearly to the existing literature.

The student is particularly to be commended for the creation of their survey. The student responded extremely well to supervisory advice on the structure of this and the survey is ultimately one of the more sophisticated I have ever seen from a student at this level of study. It is

not unrelated, I think, that the student managed to secure so many responses but that is also testament to the degree to which they thought about the form and function of the survey, and for acting on this so early in the thesis production process. It is quite unusual to see a student create their own data in this way and to be able to derive analysis that can be generalised, however partially. In talking the reader through the formulation of the survey, the student shows good knowledge of methodological debates and explains how this influenced the nature of the questions asked. Equally ably explained are other aspects, including sample selection and method of contact. The survey is ultimately analysed qualitatively through a thematic analysis.

CONCLUSIONS
(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives)

The analysis of the manifestos is rich and clearly serves to answer questions about one of the influential factors in people's voting choices. This analysis provides a good pattern of results in its own right and in another student's hands might have been all they focused on. Equally, other students may have failed to draw such persuasive connections between this analysis and that of the survey. The analysis of the survey is equally rich and findings are related back well to the literature here as well. Discrepancies are articulated fairly and sensibly. Some mention of demographic differences might have been insightful. Education level is singled out as a likely factor but other differences are not discussed. Some conclusions are necessarily hedged and would really have required follow-up interviews with the respondents in order to deliver fully on the qualitative analysis. The research question is clearly answered and the arguments well supported by data and connections to the literature. The student does not make the mistake of over-extending their claims. My only real question is whether the student might have been better limiting the scope of the analysis in order to dig down deeper into some of the implications of the responses.

FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE
(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout)

The thesis is well-written in terms of meaning always being clear. There are some parts that could have been more tightly written, there are undeniably places where the reader's attention flags. This may well speak to scope as well. The thesis is very well-presented, though the figures in chapter 4 would have been better if made smaller. There is clear logic to the structure of the thesis. Referencing is performed well.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT
(strong and weak points of the thesis, other issues)

The survey is highly impressive, as is the student's capacity for good critical analysis. As the supervisor, I have only praise for the student's commitment to study, for the originality of the work and for their impressive time management skills. The weaknesses are really a function of time and space constraints. Some conclusions could only be made more definitive through follow-up interviews but I accept the constraints preventing this.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS
(for example, word count)

These are met.

Grade (1 – 10)	8.5 (A)
Date	**Reviewer Signature**
6 July 2023	

2 – 3 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR THESIS DEFENCE

1.	You rightly talk about the limitations of a focus on western European host countries – but do you have thoughts on what the Italian diaspora in other countries might respond?
2.	If you were to extend the study to try and determine other influential factors on voting of diaspora, what would you focus on?

AGREED FINAL GRADE

(To be completed *after* both readers have read and marked the thesis independently)

Grade (1 – 10 *and* A-F)	8.5 (A)	
Date	**Reviewer 1 Signature**	**Reviewer 2 Signature**
10.7.2023		